

Rick Langford*Thoughts from here and there.*

Category: Seven Levels of Prayer

Seven Levels of Prayer (part 4)

July 19, 2011 *July 19, 2011* *Mr. Marker2 Comments*

The fourth level of prayer is what I call “praise & stage one worship.” On this level we speak the love language of God by affirming His promises and His works in our lives.

The model prayer states:

Matthew 6:13b

...For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Praising God is an awesome privilege. Praise is always focused on something and the Bible lets us know that God desires to be the focal point of our praise. Praise turns our attention away from ourselves and our problems and turns us toward God. Sometimes when we pray, we tend to focus on ourselves. Many times our prayer time becomes nothing more than a complaining session. Praise takes the attention off of “us” and puts it on God where it belongs. Someone once said, “The praising person is not talking to God about his problems, he is talking to his problems about God.” The praising person is standing on the promises of God, no matter how the circumstance looks.”

Philippians 4:4-7 says,

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

When you focus on your troubles, you are headed for a depressed, stressed out condition. But when your focus is on the One who is the solution to every problem these verses tell us that the future is full of joy and unexplainable peace.

Worship is the other aspect of this level of prayer. Worship and praise, while interrelated are different. We praise Him for what He has done, we worship Him for who He is. One of the coolest attributes of worship is that it changes us. Essentially, one becomes like what one worships. Watch what **Jeremiah 2:5** says:

⁵ *Thus says the LORD: “ What injustice have your fathers found in Me, That they have gone far from Me, Have followed idols, And have become idolaters? (NKJV)*

Let me say it again, **YOU BECOME LIKE WHAT YOU WORSHIP**. Worship superficial things and your life becomes superficial. Worship perverted things and your life becomes perverted. Worship evil things and your life becomes evil. Worship God and you become godly.

While praise is mostly verbalized, worship is a lifestyle. Praise is an outward demonstrative while worship is devotional. We praise with our hands, feet, voice and instruments of praise such as horns, strings and drums. We worship with our decisions, our actions, our responses and our innermost thoughts. The picture of praise is one of leaping and dancing. The picture of worship is on one's face before the throne. There can be praise without worship, but there can never be worship without praise. Praise is hallway that takes us to the cathedral of worship.

It is vital that we regularly visit this fourth step of prayer.

Seven Levels of Prayer (part 3)

June 28, 2011 June 28, 2011 Mr. Marker 3 Comments

The third level of prayer is **petition**. This level is exemplified for us in **Matthew 6:13** (KJV)

¹³ *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:...*

It is in this time of prayer that we “petition” or ask God to perform on our behalf. According to the model prayer, it is on this level that we are to ask God to protect us from temptation and to keep us free of the grasp of evil. This is the time we should set aside to ask for wisdom, healing for our minds and spirits, patience, understanding, etc. It is in this time of prayer where we can ask for His divine protections against disease, sickness, and calamity. On this level of prayer we should seek divine guidance, the will of God, and of course the strength to follow His will.

One of our problems is that we have used this level to ask God for stuff we want instead of asking for what He wants for us. As a result of this asking “amiss” we become discouraged and lose faith and hope because we aren't seeing the answers we want to see.

James 4:3 (KJV) says:

*Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask **amiss**, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

From The Message (including vs. 2) it is interpreted like this:

²⁻³ *You wouldn't think of just asking God for it, would you? And why not? Because you know you'd be asking for what you have no right to. You're spoiled children, each wanting your own way.*

The Amplified Version is even plainer:

[Or] you do ask [God for them] and yet fail to receive, because you ask with wrong purpose and evil, selfish motives. Your intention is [when you get what you desire] to spend it in sensual pleasures.

The frustration conceived from asking amiss was illustrated to me recently when I was invited to speak to a congregation in another city. When I got to the church I saw a group of people who truly loved God. They were sincerely trying to live for God and to live out their version of being a Christian. The theme of the night seemed to be, “I’m going to storm the gates of hell and get back my stuff.” There is nothing wrong with that in and of itself, but after hearing some stories I was able to put together this troubling fact. These people had fallen into a trap that far too many church goers (including some who go to the church I pastor) have fallen into. They had been going to “get my stuff back” for year after year after year, never succeeding and becoming increasingly discouraged, wondering when they were ever going to get a break. The problem? They have been asking “amiss.”

You see, as His children, some things are already ours. If you recall level one of this series, you will remember that He has promised to “give us our daily bread.” Our everyday necessities are covered if we simply acknowledge His authority and surrender to His will. He even said in **Matthew 6:33** (KJV)

³³*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Then in three passages in Psalms we find this:

Psalm 68:19 (KJV) *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with **benefits**, even the God of our salvation. Selah.*

Psalm 103:2 (KJV) *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his **benefits**:*

Psalm 116:12 (KJV) *What shall I render unto the LORD for all his **benefits** toward me?*

Those things are part of the package deal; *acknowledge Me and I will provide certain things for you. I will feed you, clothe you and give you a safe place to sleep. I will even give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4) if you will “delight” in Me!* You don’t even have to ask because that’s just what a father does.

So, instead of asking God for things that we think will enhance this present life, we should be asking for things that will help us enhance the Kingdom. Instead of asking God for money to pay for the car you couldn’t afford, start asking God to help you learn how to be a good steward of the income He has entrusted to you. Instead of asking God to magically heal a marriage mess in which you were part of the problem, ask Him to help you challenge and defeat the selfishness of your own heart so that the healing can start in you. We have got to stop treating God like He is some kind of genie in a bottle who’s sole purpose is to grant us our whims and wishes. He does not live for us, we were created to live for Him!

When we fall into His perfect plan, then our Heavenly Father responds by allowing us to have those things that make life easier and fun. Dad’s are like that. If we truly embrace the third level of prayer then the Kingdom is ours.

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Luke 12:32 (KJV)

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